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REMARKS

Reconsideration and further examination is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Tappan et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,603,756 [Tappan] in view of Ayandeh, U.S. Patent No. 6,069,085.

Tappan:

Tappan describes, in the abstract, a "router has a first interface to receive a packet from an external autonomous system and a second interface to transmit the packet as an outgoing packet to a border router. A processing engine places a first tag on the outgoing packet in accordance with a standard tag switching protocol. A shared field in the outgoing packet has at least one bit to indicate a use of the shared field, the at least one bit set by the processing engine to indicate the shared field carries a second tag, the second tag indicating a route from the border router to a destination of the packet..."

The Examiner states, at page 2 of the office action:

"... As per claim 1, Tappan discloses Receiving, from outside the domain ... an information message at one of the network devices ...the information message having routing information (see fig. 6, and col. 5, line 65 to col. 6 line 54); applying the given policy (i.e., the policy of domain 44) of the network device that received the information message to the routing information in the information message to produce policy filtered routing information (see col. 5, line 65 to col. 6, line 54); and flooding the policy filtered routing information to each of the plurality of network devices (see col. 8, line 51 to col. 9 line 25)..."

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Ayandeh:

Ayandeh describes, in the abstract "...A design for a network route server in which network routing functions are distributed throughout the processing elements that constitute a switching node, while maintaining the global identity and routing information exchange functions of a route server element (RSE). Intelligent line-cards are provided having the ability to route independently of the RSE. This removes the RSE as a bottleneck resource and ensures that the capacity of the switching node is limited only by the switching capacity of its switch fabric..."

In order to support a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103, every limitation in the claims should be shown or suggested by the prior art. Applicants submit that the combination of Tappan and Ayandeh fails to meet this burden, particularly in view of the amended claims, which more clearly distinguish the different treatment that is given to routing messages at a network device depending upon whether the routing messages are received from a network device that is external to the domain vs. a network device that is internal to the domain. For example, independent claim 1, as amended, now recites "...receiving an information message at a network device in the domain, the information message having routing information ... responsive to the information message being either received from a network device external to the domain ... modifying the routing information by *applying the defined policy of the domain* to the routing information to produce policy filtered routing information,... and ... responsive to the information message being received from a network device internal to the domain, flooding the routing information to each of the plurality of network devices. .."

No similar structure is shown or suggested in Tappan or Ayandeh, either alone or in combination. Applicants note that Tappan describes, in columns 8 and 9, different operations of

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a router when it is a border router (ABR2) and when it is a neighbor router (TR2). Applicants further note that Tappan states, at column 8, lines 57-61:

“... If the router is an area border router of the type that the illustrated embodiment employs, it additionally originates a filtered version of that LSA... the ABR also participates in a “flooding” procedure sending the received or newly originated LSA to other neighbor routers...”

Applicants submit that Tappan, although it discusses, at column 9, ‘determining whether to send the LSAs to a given neighbor router...’ (lines 2-3), it appears that the determination is made based on who originated the LSA, not the policy of the domain. Ayandeh merely states, at column 5, lines 5-7 “... Link states are propagated depending upon the location and designation of the routers which are responsible for route table maintenance and forwarding of packets...” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art fails to teach the limitations of the claims, as now amended. Independent claims 8, 15 and 22 have also been amended in a manner similar to claim 1, to highlight the distinction that the policy filtering is performed only on packets received from external peers, and are similar for reasons similar to claim 1. Dependent claims 2-7, 8-14, 16-21 and 23 serve to add further patentable limitations to their parent independent claims, and are allowable for at least the same reason as their parent claims.

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Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Lindsay G. McGuinness, Applicants' Attorney at 978-264-6664 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

For these reasons, and in view of the above amendments, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date

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